and circulated widely by the Department of Information Technology (DIT), Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

- A demonstration project has also been set up by the DIT at the Indian Telephone Industries, Palakkad, Kerala for recovery of copper from Printed Circuit Boards.
- Several workshops and seminars have been organized in different parts of the country by the DIT on Environmental Management in Electronics Industry.

Report on drying water lands

1897. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the Report, Inland Water Lands of India-Conservation Priorities by Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, the water lands have been drying in 14 States of the country;

(b) if so, the details of the report;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Report recommended for having a national policy on this;

(d) if so, the details thereon; and

(e) the details of wet lands in the the country as on 1st January, 1980 and as on 1st January, 2005?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Report entitled "Inland Water Lands of India-Conservation Priorities" by Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) presents information about wetlands of the size of 2 hectares and above in 72 districts located in 10 States. Wetlands in 33 districts in the studied category are reported to have undergone spatial reduction. However, there is no corroborative evidence of these findings.

(c) and (d) The SACON's report recommends formulation of National Policy on Wetlands. Some of the suggestions made thereon relate to

creation of National Wetland Authority, National Wetlands Biodiversity Register, prioritization of wetlands and capacity building in management planning of wetlands.

(e) The details of wetlands with reference to time-frames of 1st January, 1980 and 1st January, 2005 are not available in the absence of any specific study in this regard.

Guidelines allowing developmental/construction activities in forests

1898. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 517 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 4th March, 2005 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry has also allowed to cut trees in the forest areas;

(b) whether any consultations with the State Governments have been held in this respect; and

(c) if so, the outcome of such consultations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) On the persistent requests of the various State/UT Governments, and various Central Government Ministries, the Ministry of Environment and Forests *vide* letter dated 03.01.2005, considered general approval under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, and permitted the State/UT Governments to proceed with need based diversion of forest land below one hectare in each case, in favour of Government Departments for construction of public welfare amenities like schools, dispensary/hospital, electric and telecommunication lines, drinking water projects, water/rainwater harvesting structures, minor irrigation canal, non-conventional sources of energy, skill upgradation/vocational training centre, power sub-stations, communication posts, and police establishments like police stations/outposts/border outposts/watch towers, in sensitive areas (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs). While granting general approval, the Central Government also considered the fact that such construction of public welfare projects may also involve felling of trees.